



# A Calendar for Pecan Growers

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A complete, well-rounded cultural program is essential for the annual production of high-quality pecans. Such a program must satisfy the following major needs: 1) adequate tree spacing, 2) sufficient soil moisture, 3) proper soil fertility, 4) good pest control, and in the case of improved orchards 5) crop load management. When one or more of these factors are neglected, production is usually reduced.

Check the following calendar each month as a reminder to give your trees the care they need. OSU Pecan Fact Sheets can be located at <http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/View/Collection-217>.

## JANUARY

**Thinning Native Trees - *Managed Groves*:** Remove trees that have disease problems, poor production, small nut size, poor quality, if crowding occurs. Prune out damaged or dead branches. Prune low branches that interfere with cultural operations. ***Unimproved Groves*:** First year—remove all trees other than pecans. Following years—thin the remaining pecan trees to no more than 30 cross sectional square feet of trunk area per acre (about 50 percent shade at solar noon). Refer to HLA-6208 *Improving Native Pecan Groves* for guidelines to determine spacing.

**Thinning Improved Orchards:** Maintain proper tree spacing in orchard. Sometime between years 14-20, the orchard will need thinning. Remove broken or damaged branches.

**Cut and Store Propagation Wood:** Collect while dormant. For details, see Extension Fact Sheet HLA-6217 *Collecting & Storing Pecan Propagation Wood*.

**Clean and Store Harvest Equipment**

**Transplant Trees:** Tree spades can be used to move nursery trees to permanent locations.

**Service & Repair Equipment**

## FEBRUARY

**Continue Pruning and Removing Trees**

**To Start Trees from Non-Stratified Nuts:** Soak well-filled nuts from latest crop for two to three days and plant approximately three inches deep in field.

**Plant Bareroot Trees:** Use freshly dug trees of adapted varieties or seedling trees. Dig the hole large enough to accommodate the root system. Prune the taproot of bareroot trees to 18 inches long. Use water to settle soil around roots. Prune top one-third to one-half. Consult HLA-6207 *Starting Pecan Trees* for more information.

**Service & Repair Equipment**

**Prepare your budget for the upcoming growing year.**

## MARCH

**Graft Maintenance:** Prune established grafts by selecting a central leader and removing weak crotches.

**Prepare for Pests:** Purchase necessary pesticides for the coming season. Service and repair the sprayer. Consult CR-6209 *Commercial Pecan Insect and Disease Control* for options to control pests.

**Merchandising:** Place remaining pecans in cold storage (32°F or below).

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Fact Sheets  
are also available on our website at:  
<http://osufacts.okstate.edu>

**Continue to Plant Bareroot Trees through mid-March**

**Apply Fertilizer:** On producing trees apply soil applied fertilizers according to leaf analysis results from previous July sample. On pre-production trees, refer to HLA-6232 *Fertilizing Pecan & Fruit Trees* for rates of fertilizer to apply.

## APRIL

**Whip and Tongue Grafting:** Whip graft small trees in early April. Procedures are given in HLA-6205 Whip Grafting.

**Bark or Four-Flap Graft:** Begin grafting when the bark slips easily. This is usually late April in southern Oklahoma and early May in the northern part. These two grafting procedures are given in Extension Fact Sheets HLA-6204 *Bark Grafting Pecans* and HLA-6230 *Four-flap Grafting of Pecans*. When livestock graze in the grove, place grafts at least 6 or 7 feet above the ground.

**Pre-germinate seeds:** Remove seeds from stratification and pre-germinate before planting after the frost free date. Refer to HLA-6207 *Starting Pecan Trees* for directions on growing seedling container trees.

**Weed Control:** Apply pre-emerge and post-emergence herbicides. Current Report 6242 *Weed Control in Pecans, Apples and Peaches* details the chemicals that will help with weed control.

**Insect Control:** If phylloxera problems were present last year, spray when tree growth begins (budbreak to 2 inches shoot growth). Application of certain pesticides will control overwintering pecan nut casebearer, phylloxera, hickory shoot curculio, sawfly, leaf hoppers and other pests. Consult Extension Current Report CR-6209.

**Apply Zinc:** At budbreak begin applying foliar spray applications of zinc every 14 days until the end of July on small trees. Apply 2 lbs. of 36 percent zinc sulfate in 100 gallons when 300 gallons of this spray mixture are applied per acre (6 lbs/acre). Other commercial zinc materials are available and should be used according to label instructions, or at rates to supply equivalent amounts of zinc as recommended zinc sulfate rates. Zinc may be included with the pesticide spray. Producing trees will benefit from one to three additional zinc applications applied at two- to three-week intervals.

**Disease Control - *For Improved Varieties*:** spray scab susceptible varieties when leaves are about one-half normal size, April 25 to May 10 at the pre-pollination or parachute stage and then again with the casebearer spray. Then consult the Oklahoma pecan scab model at [http://www.mesonet.org/index.php/agriculture/category/horticulture/pecan/pecan\\_scab\\_advisor](http://www.mesonet.org/index.php/agriculture/category/horticulture/pecan/pecan_scab_advisor) to determine spray time. ***For Natives*,** apply first spray with casebearer spray and then consult model to decide if and when to make additional sprays.

## MAY

**Fertilize Newly Planted Trees:** When growth has started, apply approximately 1/3 pound 19-19-19 in a band about 18 inches long 12 inches from the tree. Apply the second fertilizer application to bearing trees if a split application is planned.

**Continue Propagation:** Finish bark and four-flap grafting during the month. Suitable small trees may be patch budded,

**Insect Control:** Place pecan nut casebearer pheromone traps in the orchard in mid-May and monitor regularly until first male moth capture. Monitor nuts for casebearer eggs. Check the Oklahoma pecan casebearer model at <http://agweather.mesonet.org/models/pecannut/default.html> to help determine when to begin scouting. Refer to Fact Sheet EPP-7189 *The Pecan Nut Casebearer* for more information.

**Remove Cover Crop:** Mow areas not pastured

**Continue with Zinc Sprays:** Add zinc to insecticide or fungicide sprays.

**Disease Control:** Continue scab spraying if scab model indicates need.

**Irrigation:** Apply supplemental irrigation as needed.

**Training:** Continue with training young trees. Select central leader and continue pruning out bad crotch angles and crows feet. Maintain central leader structure until tree becomes too tall to prune. Refer to Fact Sheet HLA-6245 *Training Pecan Trees*.

## JUNE

**Insect Control:** Continue monitoring nuts for casebearer eggs. Check trees to determine the need for aphid, caterpillar, and fall weevil control sprays. Put out shuckworm pheromone traps.

**Conserve Moisture:** Destroy cover crop. Control weeds by mowing, or glyphosate application.

**Irrigation:** Apply supplemental irrigation as needed.

**Maintain Grafts:** Force last year's graft by removing new growth and limbs below the graft. Attach stake for tying the graft. Control excessive growth of the graft by pruning back to approximately 18 inches.

**Disease Control:** Continue scab spray application as needed on susceptible varieties. The fungicide may be included in insecticide sprays. Continue to consult the Mesonet scab model. If native trees scab, apply fungicides after pollination is complete – normally with casebearer spray.

**Attend the Oklahoma Pecan Growers Association annual meeting:** Educational meetings, field tour, equipment and suppliers demonstrations, networking, state pecan show displayed, and pecan food show competition. Find information at [www.okpecangrowers.com](http://www.okpecangrowers.com).

**Continue with Zinc Sprays**

## JULY

**Fertilization:** Collect leaf samples for laboratory analyses to determine the amount of fertilizers to apply next year.

**Conserve Moisture:** Continue to control weeds.

**Irrigation:** Apply supplemental irrigation as needed.

**Assess crop load** of improved orchards and mechanically thin excessive fruit loads when the kernel is ½ to fully expanded while still in the water stage.

**Soil Drainage:** Clean drainage ditches. Drain heavy soils as necessary.

**Insect Control:** Continue monitoring shuckworm pheromone traps. Replace them if necessary. Install circle traps by mid-July to monitor for pecan weevil adult emergence. Check Fact Sheet EPP-7190 for information on weevil trapping. Observe carefully for aphids and second generation casebearer. Spray when necessary.

**Disease Control:** Continue spraying susceptible varieties for scab as specified by the scab model.

**Continue with Zinc Sprays**

Based on original material prepared by E.L. Whitehead.

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## AUGUST

**Watch for Insect Damage:** Continue monitoring shuckworm pheromone traps and weevil traps. Check trees for signs of twig girdler, aphids, and caterpillars. Spray as required.

**Soil Preparation:** Prepare ground for harvesting. Keep vegetation mowed or graded short. Remove branches and other trash. Condition soil for cover crops.

**Cattle should be removed** from the orchard to allow time for droppings to break down before harvest.

**Locate markets**

## SEPTEMBER

**Tree Spacing:** Mark undesirable trees for removal.

**Final Soil Preparation for Harvest:** Keep soil clean, mowed, or grazed.

**Harvest Preparations:** Service and repair equipment.

**Insect Control:** Check pecan weevil traps and spray if necessary.

**Disease Control:** If early season scab control has been good, late season scab development will not affect the crop and does not require control.

**Cover Crop:** Plant the cover crop recommended by your county Extension educator. See CR-6250 for information on legumes in pecan orchards.

**Soil Test:** Take a representative soil sample as outlined in PSS-2207 *How to Get a Good Soil Sample*. Adjust pH, phosphorus and potassium.

## OCTOBER

**Maintain Sodded Areas:** Mow sodded areas to improve harvesting.

**Plant container grown trees.**

**Harvest Early:** Pick up nuts immediately to eliminate loss to pests and prevent deterioration of kernel quality. Aerate early harvested nuts and store in unheated rooms.

**Pests:** Post "No Trespassing" signs. Control bluejays, crows, and squirrels with chemicals, traps, sound deterrents, exploiters, and other firearms. Wildlife control is most efficient when operated pre-harvest and during the first part of harvest season.

**Market pecans**

## NOVEMBER

**Continue Harvest**

**Select and exhibit nuts in local show or submit to state pecan show.**

**Market pecans**

**Education:** Sign up for Pecan Management Course that meets monthly from March to October. [www.okpecans.okstate.edu](http://www.okpecans.okstate.edu)

**Pests:** Continue control of pecan depredators.

## DECEMBER

**Harvest, Store, and Market Nuts:** Complete harvest before January 1, if possible. Clean, grade, and protect nuts from rodents. Continue to market pecans.

**Stratify Nuts:** Select well-filled, undamaged nuts to stratify. Follow directions in Extension Fact Sheet HLA-6207.

For more detailed answers to suggested activities in this calendar, consult your local county Extension educator.